

## Daizen Jinja Shrine and Noh Stage

This thatched roof structure tucked behind a rustic Shinto shrine on the south side of the city is the oldest extant Noh stage on Sado Island. The stage was built in 1846, but Noh plays have been performed at this site since 1823 and are still performed here every year. Traditional torchlit performances called “Takigi Noh” are held at the shrine in early June. The rear of the stage is decorated with an image of a pine tree, a standard motif in Noh, but the addition of a red disc representing the sun is unique to Daizen Jinja Shrine.

Daizen Jinja’s Noh stage has been adapted to fit the space available at the site and is slightly smaller than the standard 5.5 meters square. As a result, the stage’s layout has been made more compact: actors access the stage by crossing a long bridgeway from the dressing room. The bridge is both part of the stage and separate from it, and each actor’s exit or entrance is a crucial part of the performance. Normally, this bridgeway is long and straight, but here it doubles back on itself, putting the dressing room directly behind the stage. During performances, the two parallel sections are separated by a hanging curtain.

Daizen Jinja honors Miketsu no Ōkami, a deity of food and bountiful harvests. A subsidiary shrine in a secondary building is dedicated to the spirit of the mountain mystic Daizenbō, who was executed in the 1330s for his part in a violent political intrigue. Daizenbō is said to have helped a Kyoto courtier escape from Sado after he tried to murder the island’s magistrate. A descendant of the magistrate ordered the shrine built to placate Daizenbō’s angry spirit.

## An Island of Noh Actors

Noh has deep roots on Sado. Zeami Motokiyo (c. 1363–1443), one of the art form’s founding playwrights, was exiled to the island in 1434 after a falling-out with the shogun. But Zeami returned without spreading his art, and it wasn’t until the early 1600s that Noh’s local popularity exploded. In 1604, a magistrate with a background in theater was sent to the island to oversee the local gold-mining operations. He had a stage built and sent for a troupe of actors and musicians from the mainland to perform for him. In just a few short years, Noh became the local pastime. Even tiny communities of just a dozen households were recorded as having their own stages and amateur troupes. At its peak, Noh was performed at over 200 stages on Sado, most of them attached to Shinto shrines. Thirty-four of those stages survive today.

コメントの追加 [BC1]: NO.9 解説文へのハイパーリンクを挿入